

Message Text

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SUBJECT: TRANSCRIPT OF DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING OF
JULY 26 RE SOMALIA

REF: ADDIS ABABA 4546

EXTRACT OF PRESS BRIEFING FOLLOWS:

Q. HODDING, THERE WAS A REPORT ON THE MILITARY ASSISTANCE
TO SOMALIA, WHICH IS --

A. I THOUGHT YOU WOULD NEVER ASK.

Q. -- HAVING A WAR WITH ITS NEIGHBORS. DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING ON THAT?

A. YES. WELL, SPECIFICALLY, WHAT DO YOU WANT?

Q. HAVE THEY ASKED FOR ANY? AND, ARE WE GOING TO GIVE IT TO THEM?

A. WE HAVE BEEN APPROACHED BY THE SOMALI GOVERNMENT, AS HAVE SEVERAL OTHER FRIENDS AND ALLIES OF OURS, ON THE QUESTION OF ARMS SUPPLIES. WE HAVE INDICATED THAT WE

WOULD BE PREPARED IN PRINCIPLE TO PROVIDE ARMS IN COOPERATION WITH OTHER NATIONS WITH WHICH THE SOMALIS HAVE BEEN IN CONTACT. WE WOULD, OF COURSE, CONFINE ANY DEFENSE ARTICLES WE MIGHT PROVIDE TO ITEMS DESIGNED TO FILL ANY GAPS THAT MIGHT EXIST IN THE DEFENSIVE STRUCTURE FOR SOMALIA'S PRESENT TERRITORY.

Q. AND BY THAT DO YOU MEAN THAT YOU WOULD NOT PROVIDE ARMS FOR ANY EXPANSIONISM ON THE PART OF SOMALIA?
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A. I THINK THAT WE MIGHT BE WILLING TO FILL ANY GAPS THAT MIGHT EXIST IN THE DEFENSIVE STRUCTURE FOR SOMALIA'S PRESENT TERRITORY.

Q. HODDING, I HAVE A SECOND ONE.

Q. I HAVE A QUESTION ON THAT --

A. ASK ME THE SPECIFIC QUESTION.

Q. THE TERRITORY, AS IT IS ON THE MAP? THE TERRITORY AS IT IS DRAWN ON THE MAP --

A. OR THEIR RESERVATIONS?

Q. YES.

A. WE UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE OF OPINION ON THAT. ON THE QUESTION OF TERRITORY: WE CONSISTENTLY SUPPORTED AND CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE OAU PRINCIPLE OF TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF MEMBER STATES. INsofar AS THE QUESTION YOU RAISED IS CONCERNED, THAT IS A MATTER FOR THE OAU TO HAVE TO WRESTLE WITH, TO BE QUITE FRANK, BECAUSE THERE IS A RESERVATION ON WHAT TERRITORY BELONGS TO WHOM.

Q. CAN YOU GIVE ME SOME SORT OF DEFINITION, HODDING, OF WHAT CONSTITUTES A DEFENSIVE AS OPPOSED TO AN OFFENSIVE

WEAPON --

A. NO, I THINK WE HAVE BEEN AROUND ON THAT ONE BEFORE
AND I THINK THAT THERE IS A VERY ELABORATE RITUAL ON THIS
WHICH I DON'T HAVE IN FRONT OF ME.

Q. HODDING, I HAVE A GREAT INTEREST IN THIS --

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A. NO, I DON'T MEAN THAT WE HAVE GONE THROUGH IT
EXACTLY. I HAVE JUST SEEN IT GONE THROUGH BEFORE

Q. HODDING, IS THERE ANY DETERMINATION YET ON THE LONG-
STANDING REQUEST BY THE SUDAN FOR ADDITIONAL MILITARY
ASSISTANCE -- PARTICULARLY THE F-5?

A. I DON'T HAVE IT. I AM NOT SAYING THERE HASN'T BEEN.
I SIMPLY HAVEN'T SEEN IT AND I AM NOT AWARE THAT IT'S
GOING FORWARD.

Q. TALKING ABOUT IN COOPERATION WITH OTHER NATIONS, DOES
THIS MEAN THAT THE UNITED STATES MIGHT SUPPLY WEAPONS
WHICH WOULD BE PAID FOR BY ANOTHER GOVERNMENT OTHER THAN
THE SOMALI, ITSELF?

A. WELL I --

Q. NAMELY, SAUDI ARABIA?

A. INsofar AS THE FORM OF ASSISTANCE, I AM REALLY NOT
PREPARED TO GO INTO SPECIFICS, EXCEPT TO SAY THAT GRANT
ASSISTANCE IS NOT UNDER CONSIDERATION. IT WOULD HAVE TO
BE A PURCHASE. NOW, I GUESS YOU ARE ASKING ME, WOULD WE
ACCEPT MONEY GIVEN TO SOMALIA BY SOMEBODY ELSE TO BUY
ARMS FROM US? I ASSUME THAT THE QUESTION IS, IF SOMALIA
HAS THE MONEY, AND WE HAVE AGREED TO SUPPLY A CERTAIN
KIND OF ARMS --

Q. WELL, WHEN YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT "IN COOPERATION WITH
OTHER NATIONS" IS THE UNITED STATES ENVISAGING SETTING
UP SOME SORT OF CONSORTIUM TO HANDLE MILITARY AID TO
SOMALIA?

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A. NO, SOMALIA HAS, HOWEVER, APPROACHED A NUMBER OF THESE
OTHER NATIONS AND WE ARE PREPARED IN CONNECTION WITH THAT
APPROACH BY SOMALIA TO GO FORWARD WITH SOME ASSISTANCE.

Q. ARE YOU SAYING THAT OUR POLICY WOULD BE COORDINATED

WITH THESE OTHER NATIONS SO THAT WE ARE AGREEING WITH THE BRITISH AND THE FRENCH AND THE SAUDI ARABIANS AND SO FORTH WHAT IS GOING TO BE DONE -- RATHER THAN ACTING ON OUR OWN?

A. NO, I DON'T BELIEVE THAT THERE IS A COORDINATED POLICY ALONG THAT LINE TO DO A PACKAGE DEAL. I THINK WE HAVE SPECIFIC REQUESTS WHICH WE ARE CONSIDERING, AND WHICH WE WILL RESPOND TO IN THE LIGHT OF WHAT WE BELIEVE IS CONSISTENT WITH OUR ARMS POLICY.

Q. BUT IS OUR ATTITUDE ON SUPPLYING ARMS TO SOMALIA IN ANY WAY LINKED WITH THE CONTINUING RUSSIAN PRESENCE IN BERBERA?

A. IT IS NOT LINKED TO THE SOVIET PRESENCE IN BERBERA. WE DO THINK, HOWEVER, THAT IT IS DESIRABLE FOR THE SOMALIS TO KNOW THAT THEY DON'T HAVE TO BE DEPENDENT UPON THE SOVIET UNION AND THAT WE AND OTHER WESTERN NATIONS ARE WILLING TO PROVIDE THEM WITH DEFENSIVE ARMS -- IN OTHER WORDS, TO PROVIDE THEM WITH AN ALTERNATIVE IF THEY CHOOSE TO USE IT.

Q. HODDING, WHICH OTHER COUNTRIES ARE WE COORDINATING OUR ACTIONS WITH?

A. I JUST GOT THROUGH TELLING YOU THAT WE WERE NOT COORDINATING IT IN A PACKAGE THING. HOWEVER, WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE SOMALIS HAVE APPROACHED A NUMBER OF NATIONS. I WOULD PREFER NOT TO SAY WHO THEY ARE. IT WOULD BE UP TO THEM TO SAY, IF THEY HAD BEEN APPROACHED.
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Q. BUT THE UNITED STATES IS TALKING WITH THESE OTHER COUNTRIES SO AS TO COORDINATE IT -- THEN WHICH COUNTRIES ARE --

A. WAIT A MINUTE, WAIT A MINUTE. WHO SAID THAT?

Q. WELL YOU SAID WE ARE COORDINATING WITH OTHER COUNTRIES, DIDN'T YOU?

A. NO, I DON'T BELIEVE SO.

Q. WE ARE IN COOPERATION WITH OTHER COUNTRIES. WELL, ALL RIGHT, COOPERATION IMPLIES AND CLEARLY INDICATED THAT --

A. WE HAVE INDICATED THAT WE WOULD BE PREPARED IN PRINCIPLE TO PROVIDE ARMS IN COOPERATION WITH OTHER NATIONS WITH WHICH THE SOMALIS HAVE BEEN IN CONTACT. THIS HAS TO DO WITH A COMING EVENT. FRANKLY, AT THIS POINT THERE IS NO DETERMINATION THAT I KNOW OF AS TO

EXACTLY WHAT IS GOING TO COME -- INCLUDING FROM US.

Q. IS THE UNITED STATES HAVING TALKS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES
ON AID TO SOMALIA? MILITARY AID TO SOMALIA?

A. I WOULD ASSUME THAT WE HAVE TALKED TO SOME OF OUR
ALLIES ABOUT THIS.

Q. SOME OF OUR WEST EUROPEAN ALLIES?

A. SOME OF OUR FRIENDS AND ALLIES, I THINK IS THE PHRASE.

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Q. DO YOU MEAN -- FRIENDS AND ALLIES?

A. YES.

Q. SO THIS COULD INCLUDE SOME MIDDLE EASTERN COUNTRIES,
SUCH AS SAUDI ARABIA AND EGYPT --

A. IT COULD INCLUDE A NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO ARE OUR
FRIENDS AND ALLIES.

Q. IF YOU SAY GRANT ASSISTANCE IS NOT UNDER CONSIDERA-
TION, WHAT ABOUT FOREIGN MILITARY SALES CREDITS?

A. I BELIEVE THAT THERE MIGHT BE POSSIBILITIES IN THAT
AREA. I DON'T KNOW, HOWEVER, AND I AM NOT PREPARED TO
GET MORE SPECIFIC ON THE FORMS OF THIS MILITARY ASSISTANCE.

Q. IS THERE ANYTHING ON THE TYPE OF ARMS?

A. NO.

Q. THANK YOU.

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